

Presbyterian Connections

A Newsletter of the Presbytery of Pueblo

Synod of the Rocky Mountains * Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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The Presbytery of Pueblo believes we are called as the body of Christ to...

Learn to live together,

Live to love each other,

Love to serve God and neighbors.



Weavings

In response to a number of churches experiencing financial difficulties and stewardship shortfalls last year, the presbytery is putting together a special task force to address the financial concerns of both our churches and presbytery as a whole. Presbytery is facing a particular challenge with the declining mission support from G.A. and Synod's Partnership Funds. Currently, we are receiving \$57,000 from that fund but these funds may not be available 2-3 years from now. So we need to find a way to absorb that loss. However, this reality is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the larger issue concerning the mission giving of our members.

The larger issue is spiritual. How does what we give to the church reflect our commitment to Christ? What do we think about the connection between stewardship and spirituality? Is the topic of giving avoided in our sermons and Sunday school classes? Are we able to articulate a stewardship theology? Do we believe in the abundance of God when it comes to balancing the budget or do we hold back our mission gift so we can pay the mortgage?

It is this relationship between our cash and our confession that the task force will be exploring with you. We want to learn what you consider to be the mission of the church, both locally and regionally. What are our core values, our priorities, our cherished concerns? How can we together become better stewards of the gifts of God? Perhaps we might best spend this year reflecting on the purpose of presbytery as it corresponds with the purpose of each individual congregation. What does it really mean to be a

"connectional church," to be the "body of Christ" in which every member is essential, important, beloved? How can we best work together to support our common mission? What does it mean to be Christ's Church in the 21st Century?

I find myself returning to chapter three of the Book of Order which says: "The Church is called to be Christ's faithful evangelist going into the world, making disciples of all nations...demonstrating by the love of its members for one another and by the quality of its common life the new reality in Christ... participating in God's activity in the world through its **life for others** by healing and reconciling...ministering to the needs of the poor...engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger and injustice...**giving itself and its substance** to the service of those who suffer..." Then, it continues with this startling claim: "The Church is called to undertake this mission **even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone** as the author and giver of life."

This always brings me back to questioning my personal purpose: Am I committed to the mission and ministry of the Church regardless of the cost? Or, am I really concerned about perpetuating the institution of the Church no matter what is lost? God, help me to care only about the faithful following of your path of love, compassion, generosity, giving, caring in the name of Christ!

Peace and Joy,
Gary Weaver, Executive Presbyter

TRANSITIONS & CONCERNS

- We pray for the **Rev. Bob Leivers** and family upon the death of Bob's father, **Robert**, on January 23.
- We pray for **CLP Rory Gillespie** and his family upon the death of his father on January 21
- We pray for healing for **Carolyn Lewis**, wife of the **Rev. G. Loran Lewis**, who had back surgery on December 31.
- We also pray for healing for the **Rev. Karla Koll**, who was recently hospitalized in Guatemala with pancreatitis.
- Our prayers are with **Nancy Martone**, mother of **Laura Munroe** (who is the wife of the **Rev. Brad Munroe**), struggling to recover following spinal surgery.
- Changing ministries:
 - The **Rev. Sara Armstrong** is now serving Westminster Presbyterian Church in Raton, NM as Interim Pastor;
 - The **Rev. Bob Mitchell** is now serving Westminster Presbyterian Church in Pueblo as Interim Pastor;
 - Mark Epperson** will be ordained and installed March 6 as Associate Pastor of Collegiate Ministry at First Presbyterian Church of Colo. Springs;
 - The **Rev. James Singleton** has accepted a Call as Co-Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Colo. Springs beginning May 1 (the date of his installation service will be announced);
 - The **Rev. Ray Lincoln** has retired from ministry at Pueblo West Ecumenical Church;
 - The **Rev. Henry Hanna** has retired and returned to this presbytery, and now resides in Del Norte.

The Presbytery office has extra 2005 Mission Yearbooks for Prayer and Study!

These books contain a wealth of information, prayer guides, and devotions for the whole year - suitable for individuals, classes, study groups and families. Contact the Presbytery office for your/your group's copies, available **below cost** at only **\$4.00** apiece.

A Workshop Sponsored by the
Christian Education Committee:

How to Design & Implement a Sexual Misconduct Policy in your Church

1:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 23, 2005

First Presbyterian Church, Pueblo

Topics include:

- ✓ Why your church needs a Sexual Misconduct Policy
- ✓ Colorado Revised Statutes
- ✓ How to get started, sample policies
- ✓ Common mistakes
- ✓ Making a policy to fit your church
- ✓ How to maintain your policy once you have one
- ✓ Resources available to help you

Who should attend?

- » Pastors
- » CLPs
- » Elders
- » Church Staff
- » Christian Education Committee Members
- » Youth Committee Member
- » Youth Leaders
- » Sunday School Teachers
- » Anyone Interested!

Don't miss this opportunity!

**It's free, it's short, and it will give you
the basic tools you need to keep your
congregation safe.**

For more information, contact the Presbytery office or the workshop leader, Carolyn Brown, directly at: (719) 686-8726 or carolyn19@att.net

From the Resource Center

Around the World in 5 Days Living as Forgiven Children of God Vacation Bible School, 2005 [PC(USA)]

NEW VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL RESOURCES

In addition to several older “tried and true” Vacation Bible School Curricula already in the Resource Center, there is a NEW VBS program which will be available NOW for you to preview:

“Around the World in 5 Days: Living as Forgiven Children of God”
(Presbyterian Church, U.S.A VCS Curriculum)

Children will take an “imaginary train ride” through Taiwan, Northern Ireland, Brazil, Zimbabwe, and Nepal. Children ages 4 through Grade 5 will explore the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). With the help of mission workers from around the world and through activities designed to educate and enrich, participants will discover what it means to live as Christians, loved and forgiven by God.

The Curriculum includes:

- Bible stories
- Letters written by mission workers
- Crafts, games, & foods common to the customs and cultures of the 5 countries
- A new music CD created especially for this VBS

This VBS curriculum is available to preview in our Resource Center now. For your own copy of the material, or for more information and descriptions, visit

www.pcusa.org/curriculum or call (800) 524-2612 and ask for item #624900.

“What is the Latest and Newest Resource from the Presbyterian Church?”

This is one of the most frequently asked questions I receive in the Resource Center. The response to this question, now, is that one of our newest and most needed resources for churches will be available as of July, 2005, and it is:

Professing Our Faith

Professing Our Faith is a new Confirmation Curriculum added to the “*WE BELIEVE*” line of “Survey Courses.” This course seeks to provide youth with a strong background in what we, as Presbyterians, believe and what it means to belong to God and to the community of faith. *Professing Our Faith* may be used in a variety of contexts and presents lessons that teach youth the biblical foundations and theology of the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer. It invites young people to explore the meaning of their baptism and their participation at the Lord’s Table, and to learn about church polity, stewardship, spiritual practices, worship, and mission. The Leader’s Guide contains a 35-session format (year-long) plus two sessions for use at Christmas and Easter, as well as the choice of a shorter 8-session format.

Our Resource Center will have a “*sampler copy*” of this important resource later in February. If your church would like its own *sampler copy* of *Professing Our Faith*, it can be ordered beginning February 1 by calling Presbyterian Distribution Service at: (800)-524-2612. The full curriculum will be available as of July, 2005.

*Marti Sutterlin
Resource Training Consultant*

The Presbytery in Mission

Month with Our CEPAD Partners

by Sara Armstrong and Rusty Edmondson

Our friends and Presbytery partners at the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua warmly welcomed Rev. Sara Armstrong and Rusty Edmondson when they spent a month at the CEPAD Nehemiah headquarters last August. The Directors of CEPAD involved them in their various ministries. Sara and Rusty were familiar with the Nehemiah Program that hosts workcamps, conferences, and works to rebuild communities affected by natural disasters. They became better acquainted with the Gender Empowerment program which teaches women community leadership and small business skills. They visited two of the schools where CEPAD staff provide education for all ages and long distance learning for pastors. CEPAD supports a radio station with education and Christian programming. They went to a celebration of the Housing Program in Matagalapa where over 500 families have received help to build their homes. They also heard about the Political Advocacy and Lobbying CEPAD dies and the Environmental Stewardship and Development programs.

CEPAD directs the work of Christian schools in three states. In Leon by day over 100 students K-12 attend classes. The schools also offer night and distance learning for adults. The school has only enough money for one set of textbooks that the teachers use for lesson plans. The principal was excited about the idea of a partnership with a school in Colorado, or the possibility of a work group which might come to help fix up classrooms, which are in serious need of repair and maintenance. Sara and Rusty have a lot of photographs of this school for anyone who is interested.

Ramona Lopez directs the program for empowering young people. Sara attended a conference for young people from all across the country that Ramona organized. Two Nicaraguan lawyers taught the classes to help students understand their constitutional rights under Nicaraguan law. These students were very serious about the class time although there was the usual amount of teenage laughter outside the lectures. The students intended to go back to their hometowns and teach other students about their constitutional rights.

During the week, Sara helped in the Nehemiah office and Rusty attended language school. On the weekends CEPAD staff members shared with them some of their favorite places around the country. They enjoyed time on the Pacific coast, visited volcanic islands in the huge inland lake, and traveled through the central highlands.

While Sara and Rusty were there they helped the staff to develop a wonderful Power Point presentation which is available to any church or interested program. (Rusty took many of the photos in the presentation.) There are Pueblo Presbytery members who have traveled to Nicaragua who are willing to come to churches or small groups and make the Power Point presentation. There are many opportunities to be involved in this faith-based partnership, and to travel to unique environments within Nicaragua. For more information contact the Presbytery Office.

HUNGER NO MORE, FACES BEHIND THE FACTS

This videotape produced by Mennonite Media aired as a special presentation on ABC-TV. It provides a hopeful perspective on the problem/issue of hunger and is designed to move viewers to action. The video attempts to introduce viewers to the people behind the facts on hunger and highlights people of faith across America who have taken up the challenge of eradicating hunger in the U.S. and globally, and encourages viewers to see that what each person does toward this effort makes a difference.

Some of the featured speakers and special guests include: Senator Elizabeth Dole, Former Senator George McGovern, David Beckmann, President, of Bread for the World, Bob Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, John McCullough, Executive Director of Church World Service, and many more well-known persons of faith and hunger-related agencies. Includes a brief study guide.

Designed for discussion with Mission, Hunger Ministry, and Church in Society Committees, Intergenerational Settings, Adult or Youth Study Groups, and for Individual Education and Reflection.

Coming Soon To Our Presbytery: Equal Exchange Fairly Traded **COCOA**

Cocoa can be many things. It is a delicious, comforting hot drink on a cold day or the basic ingredient in our favorite chocolate.

Cocoa, like coffee, is also a vital source of income for small farmers in some of the poorest countries in the world. And like small coffee farmers, cocoa farmers are often isolated from markets and forced to sell their products through middlemen. Affordable credit is hard to obtain, and the cocoa market is always in fluctuation.

Cocoa is also big business and, like coffee, is an important international commodity. Each year, Americans spend \$13 billion on cocoa products, yet the low prices paid to small-scale farmers have kept them poor and vulnerable.

Finally, cocoa is an opportunity to do justice. If we as consumers consider our role in the global economy and change just a portion of our buying habits, we can make a world of difference for poor farmers and their families.

Beginning in April, our Presbytery will begin selling (in addition to coffee and tea) fairly traded **HOT COCOA MIX and BAKING COCOA**, both of which are certified organic and shade-grown products. They contain no chemical pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Serve Equal Exchange Cocoa, Tea, and Coffee in your congregation and in your own home
- Ask for Equal Exchange Where You Shop (ask your favorite café, food store, or grocery to carry Equal Exchange Fairly Traded products)
- Spread the word about Fair Trade....in your church, at community events, and with other places of worship
- SUPPORT OUR PRESBYTERY MISSION PARTNERSHIP WITH CEPAD IN NICARAGUA BY PURCHASING COFFEE, TEA, AND COCOA AT OUR NEXT PRESBYTERY MEETING.....or Call the Presbytery's Office (719-542-1013) to order/purchase any of the above products.

*Thank You to everyone who purchased coffee and tea at our last meeting in February. Total amount received for Equal Exchange products: **\$186.00!**

--Marti Sutterlin

Presbyterians Today

Coming in the April issue: **LIFE-CHANGING CAMPS**

In a 2002 survey, large numbers of Presbyterians said they had life-changing spiritual experiences at a camp, retreat or conference center. In "Cool times at camp," the cover article in the April issue of *Presbyterians Today*, Nancy Ferguson explores why camps are good place to experience God's presence. She also suggests ways churches can work more closely with camps and conference centers to nurture the faith of members. Ferguson, a minister and educator living in Richmond, Va., serves on the staff of Camp Hanover and teaches at Union-PSCE.

Also in the April issue is the second in this year's series of articles on What Presbyterians Believe. In "Biblical Justice" Mark Achtemeier, associate professor of systematic theology at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, explains why ministries of justice have always been an essential part of the Reformed tradition. Presbyterians, he says, believe that Jesus came to save institutions as well as souls. Achtemeier is a member of the PCUSA Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity and Purity of the Church.

In "meeting God at the Waffle House" Betty Meadow, general presbyter of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, describes the summer sabbatical that transformed her life. She left her "churched" world behind and went "undercover" for three months, working as a Waffle House hostess. To her surprise, she says, "the risen Christ showed up every day."

COMING IN MAY: **AFTER A DISASTER**

When the tsunami hit 12 countries right after Christmas, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) responded – as did a multitude of other relief agencies. But some disaster responses end up doing more harm than good. The May issue of *Presbyterians Today* looks at what the real needs are in the wake of the tsunami and what strategies are most likely to meet those needs.

For subscription information call 1-800-558-1669.

The New Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept
the people I cannot change,
the courage to change the one I can...
and the wisdom to know it's me.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance **APPEAL!**

Presbyterians have been quick to respond to the Asian tsunami disaster. But many may not know that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has been active in this response since it began, working with partner churches around the world. PDA quickly committed more than \$300,000 from One Great Hour of Sharing and other Presbyterian gifts. Those funds are already at work, not only meeting human needs but lifting up a Christian witness in an area where Christianity is a minority faith. While the needs are still being assessed, we know that the church of Jesus Christ will continue to walk with those whose grief and pain are still fresh as they begin healing and together undertake the long road to recovery.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Pray: That the people directly affected by the tsunami may know the comfort of God's presence with them, and that the relief volunteers working to assess damages and organize the response may know that they too are surrounded by the love of God and the prayers of God's people.

Give: Through your church to **Asia Relief – DR000167**. Individual gifts can also be made online (www.pcusa.org/pda/donate) by credit card, or may be sent as checks to Presbyterian Church (USA) Individual Remittance Processing, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

Churches wishing to make a material contribution may consider Gifts of the Heart Health Kits (see www.pcusa.org/pda/help/goh) or medical boxes. While some needs are known now, many of the most critical long-term needs may emerge slowly, and financial gifts will be the most flexible means of meeting them as they arise. Church leadership has issued an appeal for at least \$2.5 million to address long-term needs and the ministries that will respond to them.

Stay Informed: Prayers, news updates, and material aid needs will be posted regularly to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Web site at www.pcusa.org/pda, which also contains a downloadable bulletin insert.

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Self-Development of People Sunday March 6, 2005

For Self-Development of People Sunday, order the new 2005 SDOP devotional guide in which you will find personal stories from groups you have supported, and about how For Self-Development of People Sunday, order the new 2005 SDOP devotional guide in which you will find personal stories from groups you have supported, and about how YOUR offerings have changed their lives. Devotional Vol. II also includes scripture passages and meditation questions. This devotional can be used throughout the year.

You may order the "Devotional Vol. II"
(PDS#74350-04-014)

for Self-Development of People Sunday by:

1. Calling the Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS) at 800-524-2612
2. E-mailing PDS at PDS@ctr.pcusa.org
3. Downloading a PDF File from the website at www.pcusa.org/sdop. (The Presbytery office can also do this for you.)



Summer Camp 2005



For Grades 3-5 and 6-8
June 20-25, 2005
Horn Creek Ranch
Westcliffe, Colo.

Camp registration packets have been mailed to **all churches**. If you have not received your packet yet, notify Carolyn Brown at (719) 686-8726 or email to: carolyn19@att.net. The registration form will also be available to download from the Presbytery's website: go to www.pueblpresbytery.org, then follow the "Camps" links.

Registration deadline is June 1, but the camp will fill long before that date, so get your children registered early!

From the CONNECTIONS Archives...

“Western Theology” author, Wes Seeliger amuses while presenting his message

*by Becky Proudfoot
(Published in November 1991)*

Frequent laughter broke out as Wes Seeliger, an Episcopal priest from Houston, TX, gave two lectures at the November Presbytery meeting at the Julie Penrose Center in Colorado Springs.

According to Seeliger, Christians can be divided into Western terminology as, “Pioneers” or “Settlers” who have two radically different “bone marrow” attitudes about life.

“Pioneers” are described as having Radical Trust or those who say “YES” to life expressed in openness, excitement and interaction.

On the other hand, “Settlers” have deadly un-trust who say “NO” to life expressed as closed, defensive, narrow, boring, afraid, unfeeling and grim.

Pioneers see life as a journey, not a destination, as lived out by Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Paul. While settlers see life as a fortress lived out by such Biblical characters as the Rich Young Ruler and the Elder Brother.

Some of the assumptions of a Pioneer are:

- your past does not ruin your future
- you believe in the unconditional love of God
- life is NOT just what you make it; it is the matrix of Grace
- we are, by adoption and grace, Sons of God.

Two quotations: Mother Teresa’s statement, “God instantly eternalizes each act of love.” And, “Faith in God involves us in a permanent revolution of the mind and of the heart in a continuous life which opens out infinitely into ever new possibilities.” (Richard Niebuhr, “Radical Monotheism in Western Culture.”)

In the second lecture, under the title, “Going West” Seeliger gave the marks of a Pioneer as a person who embraces opposites:

- Is Joyful but filled with Grief
- Is Delighted with life but has a sense of

Dread

- Believes in Grace but has the gut feeling that things are not right.

Indians in Seeliger’s theology are those things which traditionally stand in the way of pioneer thinking such as Provincialism which glorifies the past; Nationalism which becomes loyalty to our country at the expense of humanity and/or the world; and Militarism expressed in the Macho image which de-

stroys any plan for world peace and is behind the power balance between men and women in religion.

The composite Pioneer according to Seeliger is a being made of the three following personalities:

1. Thomas More who was objectively uncertain,
2. Ted Koppel who affirms by listening and
3. Wile E. Coyote who is relentless and gets murdered over and over again in pursuit of his vision.

Each of us has some “Pioneer” and some “Settler” in our makeup. Let us take a good look at ourselves and see if there are any changes we want to make.

Transforming Fear into LOVE

2005 Intergenerational
Peacemaking Conference
June 20-26

Transforming Fear into Love: Peace Building for Our Time, the 2005 Peacemaking Conference will be held on June 20-26 at Ghost Ranch Education and Retreat Center in Abiquiu, New Mexico.

This special event will include a celebration of the 25th anniversary of Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

Registration forms and further information are now available online at www.pcusa.org/peacemaking.



The Presbytery's website,
www.pueblpresbytery.org,
 now has this and earlier
 newsletters ready to download to your Adobe
 Acrobat© reader.



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 the rest of the site for useful information and re-
 sources.

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Presbytery Calendar of Events

For information on any of these events, contact the Presbytery office.
 (* - indicates information can be found in this newsletter)

- 2/26 – CLP Training Event, First/Pueblo, 9 am
- 2/26 – San Luis Valley Leadership Training, Alamosa, 9 am
- 3/1 – New Church Development, Gateway, 1:30 pm
- 3/2 – Spirituality Group, (call for location), 10 am
- 3/3-3/5 – Synod meeting, Denver
- 3/6 – Mark Epperson's Ordination & Installation, First/Co.Sp., 6:30 pm
- 3/6 – Taize worship service, Ascension Episcopal/Pueblo, 7 pm
- 3/8 – Committee on Ministry, First/Pueblo, 11:30 am
- 3/15 – Colo. Springs cluster lunch, Biaggi's, 11:30 am
- 3/16 – Evangelism & Church Dev., First/Co.Sp., 10 am
- 3/17 – Pueblo cluster lunch, Rojas/Pueblo West, noon
- 3/25 – Good Friday – Presbytery office closed
- 3/27 – Happy Easter!
- 3/30 – Worship committee, First/Pueblo, 9 am
- 3/30 – Congregational Services, La Renaissance/Pueblo, 11 am
- 3/30 – Mission & Interpretation, First/Pueblo, 2:15 pm
- 3/31 – Arkansas Valley cluster lunch, La Junta, noon
- 4/3 – Taize worship service, Center for Inner Peace/Pueblo, 7 pm
- 4/12 – Budget Planning meeting, First/Pueblo, 9 am
- 4/15 – Retired Pastors lunch, Westminster
- 4/20 – Church in Society, First/Pueblo, 4 pm
- 4/22 – Preparation for Ministry, First/Pueblo, 1 pm
- 4/23 – Presbytery meeting, First/Pueblo, 9 am
- 4/23 - * Workshop: Sexual Misconduct Policy, First/Pueblo 1 pm
- 5/17 – Budget Planning meeting, First/Pueblo, 9 am
- 5/18 – Mission & Interpretation, Westminster, 11 am